

## **Statement of Work**

### **PEPFAR Gender Initiative on Girls' Vulnerability to HIV**

#### **I. Purpose**

The successful offeror will implement and evaluate the PEPFAR Gender Initiative on Girls' Vulnerability to HIV in accordance with the below specifications. The Task Order period of performance will be 36-months effective award date.

#### **II. Goal and Objectives**

Goal: To prevent HIV infection in the most vulnerable adolescent girls.

Objectives:

1. To identify and expand promising new and existing program approaches for addressing the contextual factors which place some adolescent girls at especially high risk of HIV;
2. To evaluate the feasibility, sustainability and effectiveness of these interventions and their potential for adaptation and scale-up to other settings.

#### **III. Background**

##### **A. The PEPFAR Gender Initiative**

The authorizing legislation for PEPFAR specifies that PEPFAR will support five high-priority gender strategies of the Emergency Plan: 1) Ensuring equitable access to HIV/AIDS activities and services; 2) Reducing gender-based violence and coercion; 3) Challenging negative male norms; 4) Expanding women's legal rights and protections; and 5) Increasing women's access to education, vocational training, and micro-financing. These key priority strategies along with systematic efforts to mainstream gender across all program areas are essential components to: achieving prevention, treatment and care program goals; guaranteeing women's and men's equitable access to programs; strengthening program quality and sustainability; and preventing or ameliorating program outcomes that may unintentionally and differentially harm women and men. In August 2006, PEPFAR allocated an initial \$8 million in central funding to launch the PEPFAR Special Gender Initiatives. Details of the PEPFAR Gender Initiative and priority strategies can be found at: [www.pepfar.gov/pepfar/press/81164.htm](http://www.pepfar.gov/pepfar/press/81164.htm).

The PEPFAR Gender Initiative on Girls' Vulnerability to HIV has been developed as part of a set of PEPFAR special gender initiatives. The program aims to prevent HIV infection among 13- to 19-year-old girls, by developing innovative program interventions to successfully modify contextual factors associated with increased sexual risk behavior and rates of HIV infection among these adolescents and assessing the feasibility and

effectiveness of these interventions and their potential for sustainability, scale-up, and transferability to other settings. Botswana, Malawi and Mozambique are the three countries selected for this Initiative.

## **B. Task Order Background**

Examples of contextual factors that have been identified as associated with increased sexual risk-taking behaviors and/or HIV infection among adolescent girls and young women include:

- *Not attending/dropping out of school:* In-school youth consistently initiate sex later and are more likely to use protection than out-of-school youth.
- *Economic vulnerability:* Some evidence suggests that poverty is a risk factor for young girls, (e.g. “survival sex”); other qualitative research indicates that in some cases transactional sex may be driven more by desire for luxury items and improved social standing rather than by economic necessity.
- *Sexual coercion:* Sexual coercion and violence against young women often take place in the context of unprotected sex. In addition, some evidence shows that young women who have experienced coerced sex have a higher risk of acquiring HIV due to increased risk-taking behaviors.
- *Social norms:* In some settings, social norms support early sexual initiation (inside and outside of marriage) and high levels of pre-marital sexual activity. In addition, peers who engage in risky behaviors, peers whose norms or attitudes support risky behavior, or even the perception that peers engage in such normative behavior increase the likelihood that a girl will engage in risky behavior.
- *Other health risk behaviors:* Youth who engage in high risk behavior of a nonsexual nature such as the use of drugs or alcohol are more likely to engage in risky sexual behaviors.
- *Partner age disparities:* Some evidence shows that having a significantly older sexual partner, (e.g. more than five years older) increases young women’s risk of acquiring HIV due to a range of epidemiological and behavioral factors including inability to negotiate safe sex.
- *Lack of family protection:* Lack of family protection or not residing with both biological parents are risk factors for girls. Orphaned girls, especially maternal orphans, are particularly vulnerable.

Many PEPFAR programs reach adolescent girls through broad-reaching AB prevention activities that focus on HIV education in church and school settings. However, these programs often do not reach those at highest risk, who are commonly found outside of these settings. Those at highest risk need to be reached with a package of

comprehensive services, including economic strengthening activities, to meet their unique needs. In addition, many OVC programs focus on younger children and overlook the needs of adolescent orphans, although this latter group represents a significant proportion of all orphans.

This Task Order seeks to address these programming gaps by implementing and evaluating promising integrated models to reach highly vulnerable adolescent girls with comprehensive services tailored to their particular needs. Although other important factors and contexts exist which make girls vulnerable to HIV (such as policy and legal issues), the focus of this Initiative is at the individual and community levels.

### **C. Period of Performance**

The Task Order period of performance is 36-months effective award date.

## **IV. Approaches, Anticipated Results and Proposed Indicators**

### **A. Programmatic and Evaluation Approaches**

Applicants are requested to:

- Provide evidence of the contextual, social, or individual-level factors that are associated with, and presumed to drive high rates of infection among female adolescents in Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana (including high prevalence of sexual activity and HIV infection rates among females 13-19 years of age), and identify the specific population/target group(s) to be addressed with the proposed intervention/program.
- Develop and/or identify and describe the model/program(s) and approaches to be implemented.
- Provide evidence of the potential effectiveness of the program(s) and approaches to directly alter those risk factors/conditions identified in a conceptual framework.
- Provide methods and measures (process, output and outcome) used to develop the evaluation component and to evaluate implementation feasibility, replicability, program effectiveness and sustainability.

Successful applicants will have extensive knowledge of the country context and models currently being implemented in Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana. Where appropriate, applicants are encouraged to build on or strengthen existing models and programs, especially for promising programs where an evaluation would most plausibly demonstrate positive outcomes. In addition, successful applicants will demonstrate the ability to engage in a consultative process with a wide range of stakeholders and existing USG programs in a variety of sectors. The successful applicant should be

prepared to collaborate with the USG interagency team and PEPFAR implementing partners on the ground regarding coordination and implementation of activities.

- **Programmatic approaches**

A multi-component approach with a focus on the most vulnerable girls in Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana should be undertaken to address the antecedents of risk listed in the background section above. Age-segmentation and targeting based on different types of risks girls face should be utilized to prevent girls from adopting risky behaviors as well as addressing the needs of girls already engaged in risky behaviors. It is recognized that some youth may be HIV-positive. While the focus of the program should remain on HIV prevention, the program may include ways to address the needs of HIV-positive youth. Program components could include, but not be limited to the following, targeted and tailored to meet the needs of particular communities in Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana:

- HIV prevention education focused on the “ABC” approach;
- Non-material support for girls’ continuation in, or return to, school. (School fees, uniforms, and books may not be funded under this program);
- Outreach and linkages with HIV-related health services as well as RH services such as pregnancy prevention;
- Wrap-around or direct support for training in sustainable livelihoods and/or improved access to economic resources such as development of appropriate age- and gender-specific financial literacy, development of savings products and related social support mechanisms, sustainable livelihoods and/or improved access to economic resources, including government-provided entitlements and health services;
- Parenting skills among parents and guardians of adolescents; for those adolescents without parents, developing mentoring programs to ensure all adolescents have support on a continuing basis from a caring mentor/community member;
- Empowerment and interpersonal skills to enable girls to adopt and/or maintain healthy sexual behaviors, including promotion of decision-making power of young girls within relationships, families and communities;
- Addressing peer influence by promoting positive group norms and behaviors;
- Addressing community social norms that help to reduce sexual coercion and exploitation and other harmful practices contributing to girls’ vulnerability.

Applicants may identify and propose other relevant risk factors and/or program components in addition to the ones listed above, which they plan to address through proposed interventions.

- **Capacity-building approaches**

Strengthening capacity of indigenous institutions involved in HIV/AIDS program implementation and evaluation is a key component to achieving scale-up and results, and to ensuring long-term sustainability of Emergency Plan-assisted programs. A programmatic approach to this Initiative is partnering with local organizations in Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana. Successful applicants will demonstrate a plan for working with indigenous partners, including through provision of sub-contracts.

- **Evaluation approaches**

In addition to the development and or adaptation/scaling up of promising models, this Initiative includes a strong focus on the evaluation of the approach(es) used (the evaluation component could comprise up to 20% of the proposed budget). The evaluation component should assess program effectiveness and outcomes, as well as the potential for replicability, scale-up and sustainability. The evaluation approach should include both evaluation design as well as development of an evaluation model, which assesses implementation and evaluation processes, outputs and outcomes.

## **B. Results**

Results should be demonstrated at the process, output and outcome levels (see Indicators section below).

The long-term results of this multi-sectoral approach will be reduced HIV incidence/infections averted among vulnerable girls in targeted communities and countries. Short-term and mid-term results include availability of a range of feasible, adaptable, scaleable and effective programs that can be implemented in comprehensive plans to achieve measurable changes in the capacity of institutions, service providers, communities and adolescent girls themselves to minimize or eliminate local risk factors for girls, including a reduction in risk behaviors.

Overall scope for the evaluation component will include:

- Evaluation design, including methods and (process, output and outcome) measures used to evaluate the approaches used.
- Evidence of the effectiveness, feasibility, replicability, scale-up and sustainability of the approaches used.
- Documentation and dissemination of effective/promising evidence-based models and approaches, and lessons learned through development of a Toolkit (see Deliverables below).

Proposals should include approaches to achieve outcomes most relevant to the local context of girls' vulnerability to HIV infection in Mozambique, Malawi and Botswana. Programs should address the short- and mid-term results and demonstrate evidence that vulnerability has been reduced in one or more areas by ensuring:

- Vulnerable girls within the target age range will attend, and remain in, school;
- Girls identified as vulnerable will have safe, consistent living arrangements with caring adults and mentors/social guardians in their lives;
- More girls will have access to HIV-prevention and life skills peer education, young mothers' groups, girl guides and other psychosocial support programs to promote healthy choices and provide alternatives to risk behaviors;
- More girls will have heightened risk perception and will have adopted healthier HIV preventive behaviors, such as delayed sexual debut, a reduction in multiple concurrent partnerships and/or cross-generational or transactional sex, as well as increased condom use (where appropriate);
- More girls will have access to economic empowerment programs;
- Families will be strengthened and parents/caregivers will have the skills and attitudes necessary to provide guidance in healthy choices and life planning;
- Traditional and religious leadership, local organizations, service providers, and community members will support social norms that minimize acceptability of alcohol and smoking among adolescent girls and boys, early sexual initiation for girls and boys, pre-marital sex and intergenerational sexual relationships; and

### **C. Indicators**

USAID HIV/AIDS funds are subject to the Emergency Plan requirements, thus the successful applicant will, at a minimum, report on all relevant PEPFAR indicators. Additional program indicators may be developed for more detailed program monitoring and reporting to the CTO.

Below are some illustrative indicators. Additional indicators should be developed by the contractor in collaboration with the CTO based on the results listed above. Contractors are also encouraged to submit qualitative data on program achievements and results.

#### **Illustrative Process Indicators:**

- Components of promising model and approaches reviewed and evaluated for applicability for the Initiative.
- Evaluation design developed.

#### **Illustrative Output Indicators:**

- Number of comprehensive programs that address the risk factors (e.g. economic empowerment, education, HIV/AIDS awareness) implemented.
- Increased range of multi-sectoral services offered to vulnerable girls.
- Number of vulnerable girls participating in comprehensive programs.
- Number of local organizations, service providers, and community members trained.

Illustrative Outcome Indicators:

- Number of comprehensive programs that achieve measurable changes in the capacity of institutions or service providers.
- Attitudinal indicators among the community and/or beneficiaries regarding girls' empowerment, transactional sex, etc.,
- Self-reported behavioral indicators that demonstrate risk reduction among beneficiaries.

## **V. Deliverables and/or Performance Measures**

### **A. Deliverables**

1. A Final Task Order Report, highlighting achievements with reference to established work plans and objectives and discussing any shortcomings. The report should be submitted within 60 days of completion of the Task Order and should include:

- A summary of the accomplishments and final tangible results; and
- A summary of lessons learned;
- A financial report detailing funds expended, by line item.

2. A Toolkit, to be used by USG country teams and PEPFAR implementing partners, and which includes:

- Program components, models and approaches which were (and were not) shown to be effective in addressing vulnerable girls' risk of HIV.
- Evaluation design, methods and components used to evaluate the program components, models and approaches.
- An assessment of the replicability, feasibility, scale-up and sustainability of the approaches used.
- Lessons learned through the Initiative.

All products and deliverables will be in the public domain. The contractor will not have copyright on these products.

## **B. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The contractor will be responsible for developing and executing a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) plan, in consultation with the CTO and the USG in-country PEPFAR team. Expected program results with illustrative indicators, mid-term milestones/benchmarks, end-of-project results should be elaborated in the M&E plan. Data sources and collection methodologies should also be noted for each indicator. As stated above, contractors are also encouraged to submit qualitative data on program achievements and results.

During the initial program planning period, the contractor shall work closely with the CTO and the USG in-country PEPFAR team to establish final indicators, as well as baseline data and performance targets for each indicator. The M&E plan shall be submitted to the CTO for approval within 30 days of the award of the Task Order. USAID and the successful applicant will conduct periodic activity reviews to monitor the progress of work and the achievement of results as based on the targets specified in the M&E plan. Financial tracking data will be required on a quarterly basis, as described below.

The evaluation protocols (design, methods, human subjects procedures) will be reviewed and cleared by the CTO in consultation with the PEPFAR Public Health Evaluation (PHE) Subcommittee.

## **C. Reporting**

- a. **Implementation Plan:** The contractor shall develop a detailed plan of implementation for the life of the project. The implementation plan shall clearly outline the programmatic approach as described in this contract, and provide a timeline for the completion of results and deliverables. The contractor will be responsible for ensuring that the implementation plan is developed in coordination with the USG PEPFAR teams in the countries in which the program is implemented. The Implementation plan shall be submitted to the CTO for approval within 30 days of the award of the Task Order.
- b. **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** (see Monitoring and Evaluation above)
- c. **Country-specific PEPFAR reporting requirements:** The contractor shall comply with all country-specific PEPFAR reporting requirements, including but not limited to Annual and Semi-Annual Performance reports and annual Country Operational Plan submissions. The contractor will be responsible for ensuring that all of the country-specific PEPFAR reporting requirements are met. To reduce the PEPFAR reporting burden on the contractor, the contractor shall submit to USAID/Washington the country-specific PEPFAR reports to fulfill USAID/Washington's central reporting requirements. The contractor shall collate the country-specific reports, add a brief narrative to contextualize the country-specific achievements within the broader



program objectives, and submit a final report to USAID/Washington within one week of the submission of country-specific PEPFAR reporting requirements.

- d. Quarterly financial reports should contain, at a minimum, the following:
  - a. Total funds awarded to date by USAID into the task order;
  - b. Total funds previously reported as expended by contractor by main line items;
  - c. Total funds expended in the current quarter by the contractor by main line items;
  - d. Total unliquidated obligations by main line items; and
  - e. Unobligated balance of USAID funds.
- e. Short-term consultants' reports shall be submitted to the CTO in a mutually agreed upon format and time frame.
- f. Special reports: From time to time, the contractor may be required to prepare and submit to USAID special reports concerning specific activities and topics.
- g. Completion report: At the end of the task order, the contractor shall prepare a completion report which highlights accomplishments against work plans, gives the final status of the benchmarks and results, addresses lessons learned during implementation and suggests ways to resolve constraints identified. The report may provide recommendations for follow-on work that might complement the completed work. The Contract is also encouraged to publish findings in peer-reviewed journals.

## **VI. Personnel**

### **A. Key Personnel**

Offerors must specify the positions that should be designated as Key Personnel and provide resumes for the candidates proposed for such positions. Specify the qualifications and abilities of proposed key personnel relevant to successful implementation of the proposed technical approach. The offeror shall also include, in an annex, resumes and biodata sheets (Form AID 1420-17) for all key personnel candidates. Resumes may not exceed three pages in length and shall be in chronological order starting with most recent experience. Each resume shall be accompanied by a signed letter of commitment from each candidate indicating his/her: (a) availability to serve in the stated position; (b) intention to serve for a stated term of the service; and (c) agreement to the compensation levels which correspond to the levels set forth in the cost proposal.

USAID reserves the right to adjust the level of key personnel during the performance of this task order.

An illustrative listing of possible key positions is shown below (offerors shall choose a staffing structure and determine qualifications of key staff based on their proposed technical approach and implementation plan):

1. Task Order Project Director (part-time)
2. Project Manager (part-time)
3. Monitoring and Evaluation Officer (part-time)
4. Regional/Country Program Manager (full-time, in region/countries)

## **VII. Instruction to Offerors**

### **A. Technical Proposal**

The length of the Technical proposal shall not exceed 25 pages, with single line spacing and standard one inch margins. The proposal should be submitted electronically and the software must be compatible with Microsoft office. The Appendices are excluded from the page limitation. All other parts of the technical proposal are included in the 25 page limit. Offerors should study the evaluation criteria (Section VIII, Technical Proposal Evaluation Criteria) and organize the proposal accordingly.

The technical proposal must set forth in sufficient detail the conceptual approach, methodology, and techniques for the implementation and evaluation of program activities. The technical proposal should demonstrate responsiveness to the local epidemiologic situation and must include an implementation plan for achieving the expected program results. The implementation plan should clearly outline links between the proposed results, conceptual approach, performance milestones, and a realistic timeline for achieving the program results.

The Offeror will be expected to coordinate its proposed activities with HIV/AIDS initiatives already being conducted in-country by PEPFAR, other implementing partners, other donors, and the host country government. The proposal must indicate the Offerors understanding of the activities implemented by PEPFAR implementing partners and other organizations and discuss how activities will be coordinated.

#### Cover Page (1 page)

A single page with the names of the organizations involved in the proposed program. Subcontracts should be listed separately. The Cover Page should include name of the proposed Task Order Project Director, her/his institutional affiliation, name of a contact person for the prime offeror and her/his contact information.

#### Executive Summary (2 pages)

The Executive Summary shall not exceed two pages and should summarize the key elements of the offeror's technical strategy, management approach, implementation plan, expected results and evaluation plan.

#### Technical Approach (up to 8 pages)

In 8 pages or less, describe the proposed technical strategy and approach. This section should include brief country assessments including epidemiological contexts,

contextual/behavioral risk factors, gender issues and potential for program linkages in each country. Provide a concise description of the technical strategy and methodology (what the offeror proposes to do and why) including approaches to service delivery, collaboration across sectors and capacity building strategies. Gender issues should be addressed in all stages of the activity. The technical approach section should demonstrate, with sufficient evidence, the merits of proposed model and its potential wider applications.

#### Evaluation Plan (up to 6 pages)

The technical merits and scientific vigor of the evaluation plan is an important factor in consideration of award. Specify the evaluation model and describe the evaluation plan and methodology. Please include methods and measures (process, output and outcome) to evaluate program implementation feasibility, replicability, effectiveness and sustainability. Describe how the offeror, along with proposed sub-contractors, would implement the evaluation plan.

#### Personnel (up to 3 pages)

Offeror should provide summary descriptions of roles, responsibilities and qualifications of all key personnel, local and expatriate, to be funded under the task order. Resumes of these staff, not to exceed 3 pages, and biodata sheets (AID 1420-17) should be provided in the appendix. Letters of commitment from all key personnel to the effect that they will be available for the period of the task order, should the offeror receive an award, should also be included.

#### Management approach (up to 5 pages)

Offerors should provide a clear description of how the task order will be managed, including the approach to addressing potential problems. Outline which organization/subcontractor will carry out the various tasks specified in the technical approach and evaluation plan. Offerors shall specify the composition and organizational structure of the entire project team (including home office support) and describe each staff member's role, technical expertise, and estimated amount of time each will devote to the project. Offerors may propose a mix of international and domestic advisors and specialists to cover the full range of objectives and activities. The management plan should also demonstrate how the offeror will use in-country staff and resources. If the offeror plans to collaborate with other organizations, government agencies or indigenous organizations for the implementation of the task order, the services to be provided by each agency or organization shall be described. Offerors that intend to utilize subcontractors shall indicate the extent intended, the method of identifying subpartners, and the tasks/functions they will be performing. Offerors shall state whether or not they have existing relationships with these other organizations and the nature of the relationship.

## **B. Cost Proposal**

There is no page limitation on the Cost Proposal. Offerors shall submit a summary cost proposal for a 36-month operating period (for example, November 1, 2007-October 31, 2010). The following minimum cost breakdown should be provided: Salary and wages with detailed LOE, Fringe Benefits, Consultants, Travel, Transportation and Per Diem, Equipment and Supplies, Subcontracts Participant Training, Other Direct Cost Overhead, G&A, Material Overhead, and any other Indirect Costs. Provide a copy of the organization's NICRA if applicable. The budget shall be supported by information in sufficient detail to allow a complete analysis of cost; specifically, a budget narrative must be included which discusses, by cost element, the basis of estimate for the budget line item. Offerors must propose costs that are realistic and reasonable for the work in accordance with their respective Task Order Technical Proposals.

## **VIII. Evaluation Criteria**

Each technical proposal will be evaluated qualitatively and categorized as Outstanding, Very Good, Good, Marginal and Unacceptable in relation to the evaluation factors set forth in this solicitation. The following adjectives shall be used as general guidance in assessing each technical criterion and the technical proposals as a whole:

Outstanding  
Very Good  
Good  
Marginal  
Unacceptable

### **Criteria**

The evaluation criteria (1), (2), and (3) as listed below will be evaluated in descending order of importance. Sub-criteria within each primary criterion will be evaluated equally.

#### **1. Technical Understanding and Approach to the Statement of Work**

The extent of the applicant's understanding of and feasibility/ability to successfully perform the activities as described in the Statement of Work, including:

- Country assessments, including: epidemiological context; assessment of risk factors, gender issues and potential for program linkages.
- Use of appropriate technical strategies and methodologies, including: approaches to service delivery, plans for involvement of local partners, ability to collaborate across sectors; and adequate consideration of gender in all stages of activity.

- Approach to evaluation activities, including: methods and measures (process, output and outcome) used to evaluate implementation feasibility, replicability, program effectiveness and sustainability.
- Ability of the Offeror to develop an in-country presence and ability to effectively manage efforts in-country, including: ongoing coordination with the USG in-country PEPFAR team; training and capacity-building plans; and depth of organizational experience in managing relevant large-scale projects, including the ability to transparently manage task orders involving collaborative efforts drawing upon the full range of available skills and experience of the applicant, and maintain clear and effective lines of communication between and among clients, technical, administrative, and logistical project staff.

## 2. Quality of Personnel

Demonstrated ability to gain access to appropriate technical personnel, including:

- Demonstrated technical experience and expert qualifications (e.g., HIV prevention and gender, program management, and evaluation skills) in all the programmatic areas outlined in the Statement of Work for headquarters, international and in-country staff;

## 3. Price/Business Evaluation

Proposed costs shall be evaluated for reasonableness, allowability and allocability. This analysis is intended to determine: the degree to which the costs included in the cost/price proposal are fair and reasonable; and reasonableness of proposed labor rates, indirect cost rates and fee.

**END OF RFTOP**